



CELEBRATING
OUR CENTENARY



ENGINEERS
AUSTRALIA

Hall of Fame Inductees

Engineering Heritage Queensland

Sir Charles BARTON OBE

Hon FIEAust

1907 - 1986

INDUCTED IN 2008

Sir Charles was born in Bowen and graduated with a BE from the University of Queensland in 1929.

His first jobs were with Townsville City Council then Main Roads Commission and in 1935, with James Pollock he set up a consulting practice in Mackay. He was an infantry major in WWII, joining the Citizen Military Forces (now Army Reserve) after the war and retired in 1958 as a colonel.

As Commissioner of Main Roads in 1960, he introduced modern methods of materials testing, road design and construction, and forward planning. Barton determined the criteria that highways, main roads, developmental roads and secondary roads had to meet.

He obtained government approval to overturn the restriction for the construction of roads parallel to and adjacent to railway lines. In 1963, obtaining Government approval for a Road Plan for Queensland he produced a logical road system on which funds could be spent. In the 1960s, Barton directed funds for Federal Government road building under the Brigalow Scheme to be designed and supervised by consulting engineers not by increasing MRD staff.

To reduce congestion in Brisbane, he obtained government approval for Wilbur Smith from the USA to study and report on the results. The report recommended a network of freeways.

In 1969 as Coordinator-General of Public Works, responsible to the Premier of Queensland, he reduced the engineering strength to three engineers to supervise the construction of the North Pine Dam, and oversaw the design and construction of Wivenhoe Dam.

In 1972, a new Act gave the Co-Ordinator-General's Department new powers relating to regional planning and environmental impact, and a technical branch was established to coordinate the provision of infrastructure for major projects, considering environmental impact statements. For his accomplishments, Sir Charles was awarded his Knighthood in 1974.

Sir Charles' brilliance in many fields – technical engineering, state-wide planning, astute allocation of funds for needed infrastructure, and his quiet ability to encourage, mentor and obtain the best from his staff set him well above his peers in state development.